

Panhandle/State

B

FRIDAY

June 15, 2007

Obituaries - B3 • EMS Log - B3 • Police Log - B3 • Advice - B4 • Stocks - B5

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Delegate wants quarry approval

Jefferson County Commission plans to vote on rezoning petition

By BETH HENRY
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

CHARLES TOWN — Delegate Bob Tabb on Thursday urged the Jefferson County Commission to allow a controversial commercial project to move forward, saying economic development is key to the community's success.

Tabb spoke during Thursday's regular County Commission meeting and focused on the proposed Old Standard Quarry project, which is south of U.S. 340 on Millville Road. Developers hope to build upscale commercial office buildings and a hotel on the property, although the County Commission would first need to approve a rezoning petition to allow for commercial use.

"I think it's a step forward, and I think it would help the tax base," said Tabb, D-Jefferson, during Thursday's meeting. "If the county chooses not to move forward with projects like this, it makes it very difficult for me as a legislator to go to the state and say we need help."

Encouraging commercial developments will help all Jefferson County residents, he said, not only by creating jobs but also by increasing the tax base so that residents don't have to see higher taxes and fewer services. And Tabb



TABB

said he would like to see business diversity grow in the area, so that the county is not dependent on gaming industry revenues.

"The county has control of its own destiny," he said.

Tabb added that the county needs more businesses, not houses. The property's current zoning allows for more than 1,600 high-density residential units to be built on one section of the land.

"I think what is currently allowed would actually diminish the viewshed more than what is proposed (for the



CORLISS

commercial buildings)," Tabb said, referring to concerns by planning commissioners and representatives from the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park about the way the project would affect views from the adjacent park property.

The Jefferson County Planning Commission decided unanimously on Tuesday that the rezoning petition is not consistent with the county's comprehensive plan, a document that sets land-use guidelines. Planning commissioners said the need to protect historical properties, viewsheds and other important rural characteristics in that area of the county outweighed the potential for jobs and economic development.

See QUARRY B2

Quarry

FROM PAGE B1

County commissioners will review the Planning Commission's recommendation, but the County Commission will make the ultimate decision on the rezoning request.

In Thursday's meeting, county commissioners agreed to take a tour of the property next week and have a work session with staff members. Then, the commission plans to vote on the rezoning petition the second week in July.

During a recent public hearing, public comments ranged from concern over traffic increases and backups on U.S. 340, to the potential impact on historic Civil War sites and the area's viewshed. Those in favor of the project said Jefferson County needs more upscale commercial projects, and the thousands of potential jobs that could be created.

Project plans call for a 60,000-square-foot signature office building, a 150-room hotel with a 22,500-square-foot conference center and additional office buildings along the property's lake and the Shenandoah River. Twenty acres of the site would be set aside as parkland, which could be used for hiking and biking trails, as well as public fishing areas.

County commissioners said they understand that this has become a complicated political issue, and Commissioner Greg Corliss said he is interested in getting as much information as possible.

"Our job is to make a political decision about whether this is good or bad for the county," Corliss said.

— Staff writer Beth Henry can be reached at (304) 725-6581 or bhenry@journal-news.net